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ABSTRACT

This paper briefly traces the history of using cooperating teachers in the public schools to help in the training of preservice student teachers. The strengthening of standards of preparation through the years for cooperating teachers is discussed, and recent surveys of the state standards and legal requirements for cooperating teachers are noted. There appears to be no uniformity among requirements for the teachers who guide preservice teachers in their training. It is suggested that uniform basic levels of skills attainment by these teachers should be met. (JD)

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Winners Need Trainers:

Looking at Cooperating Teacher Educators

A Paper Presented at The Southeastern Regional Association
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Winners Need Trainers: Looking at Cooperating Teacher Educators

In order to look critically at the future of teacher training, an examination of the role of cooperating teachers in the past may be important. In Mead's (1930) account of the origins of student teaching, two types of activities preceded student teaching: teacher guilds and tutors. In the 16th century, teachers in Germany formed themselves into guilds much like other tradesmen (Robbins, 1912). In order to become a teacher, young persons apprenticed themselves to master teachers, learning the art of teaching through observation and practice. Another practice that likely gave rise to practice teaching was the use of older students as tutors for younger students.

Early in the 1800's, Americans began to develop a formalized system for training teachers. A carefully planned program of practice teaching was carried out by the Oswego schools in New York under the supervision of Edward A. Sheldon (Dearborn, 1925). Sheldon organized a rigorous system of practice teaching in which teachers-in-training spent considerable time learning the subject matter and receiving training in methods of teaching after school. A debate concerning the value of practice teaching took place at the First Annual Convention of the Americal Normal School Association in 1859 (Armentrout, 1927). There was considerable discussion as to whether practice teaching was necessary training. Parents were concerned about having their children "practiced upon" by inexperienced teachers (Williams, 1942). Two of the central issues debated in the early model schools were: (1) who should supervise the student teacher, a special critic teacher or regular faculty member , and (2) what institution should be responsible for the practice school, the normal school or the public schools. According to Harper (1939) these questions were not decided.

Yearbooks of the Association for Student Teaching (AST) reveal a sustained concern for effective supervision of student teachers over the years. Minutes from the National Association of Directors of Supervised Student Teaching record as early as 1922 the approval of this resolution: "Critic teachers as well as supervisors and directors of student participation should have had training in laboratory departments or similar experiences." Little attention was given to inservice preparation, however, before 1934. This perhaps is explained by the fact that before this time, most student teaching was done in campus laboratory schools whose teachers were master teachers. By 1934, many large universities were making extended use of the public schools and were providing inservice programs for public school supervisors.

The first yearbook to give detailed attention to the inservice education of supervising teachers appeared in 1954. It indicated the need for both formal and informal preparation of supervising teachers for their new responsibilities. Curtis and Tanruther (1954) examined the types of organization used for inservice programs and found that formal devices - graduate courses and seminars - were reported as operating in more than 40 percent of the responding institutions. Informal devices - cooperatively planned study groups, conferences for groups of supervisors, workshops, and individual conferences - were reported to be used widely in all cooperating systems. Some colleges provided handbooks for guiding supervising teachers as a supplement to the informal conferences and workshops provided.

In 1954, ten states had universities and colleges which offered credit course work for supervisors of student teachers. Lindsay (1954) called for the Association for Student Teaching to begin to prepare competent supervisors of student teaching by a guided program of laboratory-type experiences for

already certified teachers who desired to become specialized in this aspect of teacher education.

The 1959 yearbook for the AST sounded the first call for a structured and eventually mandated requirement that supervising teachers be specifically prepared for the important work of student teacher supervision. In 1961 the association returned to a consideration of the qualifications of the supervising teacher. The following "essential compentencies" were identified: 1) scholarly control of knowledge; 2) expertness in the teaching-learning process; 3) skill in decision-making; and 4) insight into one's self as a professional.

A number of studies in recent years have focused attention on the importance of the cooperating teacher's role in teacher preparation. James Bryant Conant (1963) prepared a classic report, The Education of American Teachers. Conant formulated a variety of ideas concerning the administration and supervision of student teachers. He proposed the development of state-approved practice teaching arrangements and urged the state government to establish guidelines and criteria for the certification of practice teachers.

One of the most notable ideas offered by Conant was the improved status of the supervisory personnel in student teaching. Within the public schools, he suggested that cooperating teachers be selected who are "known to school officials, collegiate faculty and the state department as highly competent teacher(s) both of classroom pupils and student teachers." Conant also went on to state, "cooperating teachers should have time freed to aid student teachers; and should also have increased compensation in recognition of added responsibility and special talent."

Yates (1981) found that student teachers in England believed they learned more from cooperating teachers than from their college supervisors because

cooperating teachers were more accessible for observation and discussion. Haberman and Harris (1982) studied the legal requirements for cooperating teachers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Twenty-four of the 50 states reported that they had no legal requirements; two required only teacher certification; 16 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia required some teaching experience (generally two or three years of teaching); nine states and Puerto Rico required a program or course related to the supervision of students; and three states required a masters degree. West Virginia and Kentucky had the most extensive certification programs involving various levels of certification which required increasing years of teaching and course work.

In examining the role of cooperating teachers in the past, we observe a strengthening of standards of preparation through the years. States have set up a variety of certification programs for teachers who want to be specialized in this area. Recent surveys of the states show, however, that not all of the states have legal requirements for cooperating teachers.

Within the southeast region of the Association of Teacher Educators, Arkansas, North Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee report no state level requirements for cooperating teachers. The decisions regarding who should fulfill these important positions are left to the individual districts or state institutions. Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia require that cooperating teachers hold a valid professional certificate. A master's degree and a special university level course in supervision of student teachers is required in Kentucky and Louisiana. A training program for cooperating teachers is required in Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia. Recommendation by appropriate school personnel and/or the director of teacher education is required in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. Most of the 13 states

require specified years of experience (usually at least one at the level and/or subject area involved). States requiring a minimum of two years teaching experience are Georgia and South Carolina. Requiring three years experience are Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Virginia; requiring four years experience is Kentucky.

Of twenty other states and protectorates returning the survey, five had no state requirements. The other fifteen showed similar requirements to those listed above. Eleven required professional certification, two required a master's degree, ten required two to five years teaching experience. Three required a special university course in supervision of student teachers, and five others required a training program of some description. Recommendation by appropriate school personel and/or director of student teaching are required in four states.

In summary, there appears to be no uniformity among requirements for the teachers who guide our pre-service teachers in the most important learning experience in their teacher training program. Teachers of children in grades K-12 must be certified in their areas; supervisors of teachers and principals must hold certification in their areas of expertise; teachers at the college level must also meet certain qualifications in order to teach at the college level. Should not these cooperating teachers who train our future teachers meet a uniform basic level of skill attainment? How can we as concerned educators bring about reform in this area?

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State	No State Requirement	M. Ed.	Profess. Certif.	Superv. of Student Teaching	Training Program	Years Exper.	Rec. of Schl. Off. and/or Dir. of S.T.
Alabama						3	X
Arkansas	X						
Florida	X						
Georgia			X		X	2	X
Kentucky		X	X	X		4	
Louisiana		X	X	X		3	
Mississippi			X		X	3	
N. Carolina	X						
S. Carolina			X		X	2	X
Tennessee	X						
Texas			X		X	2	
Virginia			X		X	3	
W. Virginia			X			3	